According to this policy, Operation Vijay was treated as a war-like engagement and a special welfare package including enhanced ex-gratia compensation of Rs. 10 lakhs to the Next of Kin of the Battle casualties was provided. However, no distinction has been made between Operation Vijay and post-Operation Vijay casualties, in so far as the pensionary benefits are concerned. All war widows would be entitled to liberalized family pension.

Conferring war widow status to widow of soldiers who died before 1st January, 1999

3078. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the widows of soldiers who sacrificed their lives during various operations before 1st January, 1999 are not being given the status of war widows; and

(b) what steps Government propose to take to remove the disparity and give status of War Widow to the widows of those died before 1st January, 1999?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) No, Sir. When a soldier dies in any operation, there is a system of declaring him as a battle casualty as per the prescribed procedure. Widows of such battle casualties are commonly known as war widows.

(b) Various benefits are given to the war widows/next of kin of the battle casualties depending on the nature of operations.

Submarine deal with France

3079. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has signed a US$ 1.8 billion submarine deal with France recently to acquire six submarines to replace to "fast decommissioning" of India's fleet;